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Message Text

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12
ACTION EB-07

INFO OCT-01 ARA-06 ISO-00 CAB-02 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

DOTE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 /026 W
---------- 129986
R 082130Z APR 76
FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3048

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E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, HO
SUBJECT: CIVAIR: STATUS OF LINEAS AEREAS NACIONALES, S.A. DE C.V. (LANSA)

REF: (A) STATE 68710; (B) TEGUCIGALPA 1618

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

SUMMARY: EMBASSY OFFICERS HAVE DISCUSSED THE LANSA STATUS WITH GENERAL MANAGER BILL EARL AND A CREDITOR, KENNETH KEPLER. THIS CABLE PROVIDES EXPANSION OF INFORMATION REQUESTED REFTEL A PROVIDED IN REFTEL B. END SUMMARY.

1. MR. BILL EARL, HONDURAN CITIZEN AND MANAGER OF LANSA WAS ADVISED THAT THE EMBASSY WAS SEEKING GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT LANSA IN COMPLIANCE WITH A REQUEST FROM WASHINGTON. MR. EARL PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION ABOUT THE AIRLINE:
A. LANSA IS PRESENTLY OPERATING FOUR DC-3S AND THREE 4-TO-6 PASSENGER AIRCRAFT ON ITS TRADITIONAL DOMESTIC ROUTES.
B. LANSA IS RECONDIIONING ITS DC-4 WHICH IS PRESENTLY LOCATED AT THE AIRPORT IN LA CEIBA. THAT WORK IS EXPECTED TO BE COMPLETED WITHIN 60 DAYS.
C. LANSA WANTS TO BUY AN ADDITIONAL DC-4 FROM THE HONDURAN AIR FORCE. THAT AIRCRAFT IS PRESENTLY LOCATED AT THE TONCONTIN AIRPORT. MR. EARL SAID THAT HE THOUGHT THAT THAT AIRCRAFT WOULD BE BOUGHT AND PLACED IN LANSA'S FLEET WITHIN 90 DAYS.
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D. MR. EARL SAID THAT HE TALKED TO THE MINISTER OF TRANSPORTATION

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EARLIER THIS WEEK REGARDING THE FORMAL REESTABLISHMENT OF LANSA'S TRADITIONAL DOMESTIC ROUTES AND THE ADDITION OF A NEW ROUTE TO LAMOSQUITIA (INCLUDING STOPS AT LIMON, PALACIOS, BRUS LAGUNA, AND PUERTO LEMPIRA). MR. EARL SAID THAT THE MINISTER GAVE HIM VERBAL APPROVAL FOR LANSA'S PLANNED ROUTES. MR. EARL SAID THAT THE DUCUMENTS WHICH WILL FORMALIZE THE GRANTING OF THE ROUTES ARE NOW ON THE CHIEF OF STATE'S DESK AWAITING HIS SIGNATURE.
E. MR. EARL SAID THAT THERE ARE APPROXIMATELY 700 SHAREHOLDERS OF LANSA STOCK. HE ESTIMATED THAT 99 PERCENT OF THE SHAREHOLDERS ARE HONDURAN NATIONALS.
F. MR. EARL CLAIMS THAT BANCAHSA HAS PROVIDED AN UNLIMITED LINE-OF-CREDIT TO FINANCE LANSA'S OPERATIONS. HE SAID THAT BANCAHSA REPRESENTATIVES HOLD TWO OF THE FIVE SEATS OF LANSA'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS.
G. MR. EARL EMPHASIZED THAT LANSA IS EAGER TO OBTAIN PERMISSION TO REESTABLISH ITS SERVICE BETWEEN HONDURAS AND TAMPA.

2. MR. KENNETH C. KEPLER, REAL ESTATE BROKER AND INSURANCE CONSULTANT, 13597 WALSINGHAM ROAD, S.R. 688, LARGO, FLORIDA 33540, CALLED ON ECOMOFF ON APRIL 7. MR. KEPLER CLAIMS LANSA OWES HIM APPROXIMATELY $75,000 FOR GOODS AND SERVICES PROVIDED THAT AIR LINE IN TAMPA, FLORIDA. HE STATED THAT OTHER PERSONS OF TAMPA, INCLUDING THE MUNICIPAL AIRPORT, HAVE DEBT CLAIMS AGAINST LANSA. MR. KEPLER, THROUGH HIS HONDURAN ATTORNEY, EDGARDO DUMAS, HAS OBTAINED A COURT ORDER AGAINST THE CARRIER BASED UPON NON-PAYMENT OF DEBTS. IT IS NOT CLEAR FROM DISCUSSION WITH MR. KEPLER THAT THE COURT ORDER WILL BE USED. IT MAY HAVE BEEN OBTAINED SOLELY TO BRING PRESSURE ON LANSA MANAGEMENT. MR. KEPLER CLAIMED TO HAVE CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT TO OBTAIN CAB PERMISSION FOR RENEWAL OF LANSA'S CARGO PERMIT TO TAMPA. HE STATED HE HAS LEASES FOR TWO DC-4 AIRCRAFT THAT LANSA COULD USE. MR. KEPLER STATED THAT THE FUTURE OF LANSA IS TIED TO ITS CARGO RATES AND THE POTENTIAL TO OBTAIN PASSENGER RIGHTS TO INCLUDE SERVICES TO THE CAYMAN ISLANDS AND MEXICO. END UNCLASSIFIED

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3. THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT BANK, BANAFOM, CAPTAIN SAN MARTIN, CALLED ECOMOFF APRIL 7. CAPTAIN SAN MARTIN IS ALSO THE CHIEF OFFICER OF BANCAHSA. HE STATED HE REFUSED
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TO GIVE AN APPOINTMENT TO MR. KEPLER WHO IS QUITE AGGRESSIVE AND WITH WHOM CAPTAIN SAN MARTIN HAS NO BUSINESS TO CONDUCT. BANCAHSA'S INTERESHIN LANSA IS REPRESENTED THROUGH MR. CORALES OF THAT INSTITUTITION. MR. KEPLER TOLD ECOMOFF THAT HE CONSIDERS CAPATIN SAN MARTIN AS "THE MAN" CONTROLLING A VERY COMPLEX ARRANGEMENT WHICH INCLUDES THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A BELIZE AIR LINE. END LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
SANCHEZ

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